



2008

A Year of Rhymes and Riddles

Understanding the Early Years (UEY)

Cumberland County, NS



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A Year of Rhymes and Riddles

Children love rhymes and riddles. They enjoy silly songs, corny jokes, and non-sense poems. Playing with language in this way helps children to be 'aware of words'. Children who are 'aware of words' listen more closely. They know that:

- words are made up of sounds;
- these sounds can be changed;
- changing one sound makes a different word with a different meaning.

When children are aware of the sounds in words, they learn to read more easily. This awareness helps them to understand that:

- written words are spoken words in printed form;
- the letters of written words represent sounds;
- changing a letter in a word changes its sound and its meaning.

English has a small set of spelling patterns that are repeated to make many words. New words are made by adding different beginning sounds, such as in:

<i>at</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>all</i>	<i>oat</i>	<i>ill</i>	<i>ight</i>	<i>and</i>
cat	bit	ball	boat	bill	night	band
hat	sit	tall	goat	hill	right	hand
mat	fit	wall	coat	will	tight	sand.

When children play with rhymes and riddles, they come to understand these patterns, and can more easily read new words with the same patterns.

This calendar has rhymes, riddles and jokes for every month of the year. Parents and caregivers can do many activities to have fun with language while at the same time helping children to be aware of words and sounds.

Activities



Read, chant, and sing rhymes, riddles, poems, and songs out loud.



Tell simple jokes that call attention to the sounds and words of language. Find or make up new jokes on a similar theme.



Say part of a nursery rhyme, riddle, or poem. Ask your child to listen closely, be like an echo, and say the same part.



Add finger play or body movements for rhymes such as "*Eensy Weensy Spider*" and "*Round and Round the Garden*".



Say part of a familiar rhyme and ask your child to finish it.



Ask your child to: clap the words, tell which words sound alike, change the first sound in the rhyming word to make another word.



Say a familiar rhyme or riddle and put in a non-rhyming word. Let your child notice and point out the mistake. For example, change, "*Dig in the ground and see me squirm. I'm long and wiggly. I'm a worm*" to "*Dig in the ground and see me hide*".



Identify one word as the 'magic word' – say the rhyme or riddle and have your child clap when the magic word is spoken.



Ask your child to draw a picture of their favourite rhyme or riddle.



Play rhyming games. For example, say: "*I am looking at something that rhymes with **cat***." Your child looks around to find the object, and then says the name, such as **bat**, or **hat**, or **mat**.



Once your child knows 6 rhymes or riddles, make a 'cube' game. Paste pictures on a small box – 1 picture for each rhyme or riddle. Ask your child to pick a picture on the cube, and then tell the rhyme or riddle.



Use known rhymes to make new rhymes. For example, *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* could be changed to *Five Little Monkeys sitting in the Tree – One jumped down and bumped his ____ (knee)*.

Talk together. Read together. Tell each other riddles, rhymes and jokes.

Share. Enjoy. Have fun!

All drawings in this calendar were done by children participating in summer (2007) programs at Maggie's Place Family Resource Centre, Amherst, Nova Scotia.

"A Year of Rhymes and Riddles" was developed by Joan Beswick and Carol Oram, coordinators of the Cumberland Understanding the Early Years initiative (www.cumberlanduey.ca).